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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions 1991/1 A and B and 1991/2. By paragraph 5 of resolution 1991/1 A, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it on the widest possible scale, and to report on its implementation to the Commission at its forty-eighth session. By paragraph 5 of resolution 1991/1 B, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental orgnizations, international humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations, and to submit a report on progress in its implementation to the Commission at its forty-eighth session. By paragraph 6 of resolution 1991/2, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, the regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations and to give it the widest possible publicity, and to report to the Commission at its fory-eighth session.

2. In accordance with the requests of the Commission, the Secretary-General brought resolutions 1991/1 A and B and 1991/2 to the attention of all Governments, by a note verbale dated 25 March 1991. They were also communicated to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

3. Furthermore, the resolutions were transmitted to all the specialized agencies and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as to competent regional intergovernmental organizations. In addition, the resolutions were brought to the attention of 59 international humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations.

4. In response to the request of the Commission on Human Rights contained in resolutions 1991/1 A and 1992/2, the Department of Public Information undertook the following activities:

(a) The Department of Public Information provided press coverage of all meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, including the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. Press releases were also issued on regional seminars and symposia organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, including those held at Madrid and Montreal. The human rights of Palestinians were discussed at these seminars and symposia;

(b) Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the occupied Arab territories;

(c) DPI continued to distribute its publications, including a revised version of the booklet The United Nations and the Question of Palestine, in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish; the booklet For the Rights of Palestinians; Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the booklet entitled Human Rights for the Palestinians; and The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. A total of 13,703 of these publications, in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish, were distributed;

(d) The "World Chronicle" produced a video entitled "Visit of the General Assembly President to the Occupied Territories", in which Dr. Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice, and President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, stresses the human dimension of the question of Palestine and the need to solve the problem through United Nations efforts. The Audio Visual Promotion and Distribution Unit of the Department of Public Information disseminated worldwide to its film and video libraries and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization the video "About the UN: Palestine";

(e) Fifty-nine radio programmes of varying lengths on the question of Palestine and related topics were produced between 1 January and 30 June 1991;

(f) The Department co-sponsored two national encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine at Brussels (22 May) and Bonn (24 May). Those two events were hosted at Brussels in cooperation with the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation and with the support of the Commission of the European Communities, and at Bonn in cooperation with the German Association for the United Nations. The theme of the two encounters was the protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation. Two Palestinian and two Israeli panellists addressed that theme in each of the two cities with brief opening remarks, followed by a substantive dialogue between the four panellists and about 40 senior media representatives who had been invited to participate. The two Palestinian panellists were Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, and Sa'ab Erekat, Professor of Political Science at Al-Najah University, Nablus, West Bank. The two Israeli panellists were Yael Dayan, Labour Party activist and author, and Avigdor Feldman, an attorney who co-founded the Israeli human rights documentation centre, Betzelem, and who had appeared in a number of landmark civil rights cases in Israel. The two encounters were moderated by the Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section of DPI;

(g) The Department held a briefing at Headquarters for representatives of non-governmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, entitled: "A United Nations Perspective on Palestinian Rights";

(h) The Department sponsored an international encounter for European journalists on the question of Palestine, which was held at Helsinki from 3 to 5 June 1991. That encounter examined the prospects for a Middle East peace conference. A news mission for European journalists to the Middle East was conducted under the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department, as an integral extension of the international encounter. The news mission was held from 31 October to 14 November 1991 at Tunis, Amman, Damascus and Cairo. The Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programme of the Department served as mission coordinator.